



Virginia loosens red tape for cosmetology license

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Obtaining a cosmetology license in Virginia will likely become easier following a vote from the Board for Barbers and Cosmetology to ease the requirements to get the license.

“Reducing regulatory obstacles that get in the way of both businesses and talented Virginians from entering the workforce has been a priority of mine since day one,” Gov. Glenn Youngkin said in a statement. “Not only will this allow individuals to get to work sooner and help businesses find skilled workers, but it even reduces the amount of student loans a graduate will have to take on.”

The board voted to reduce the number of training hours to eligible for a cosmetology license. The current rule 1,500 hours of training, but the board voted to reduce that number by more than 33%, down to 1,000 hours. The change will need to go through several regulatory steps before it can become final, which includes a public comment period.

According to the governor’s office, the average cost of education to obtain a cosmetology license in the commonwealth is about \$16,000. It also takes a person nearly one year to complete. The reform is intended to reduce the cost of the license, reduce the time it takes to acquire one and emphasize public protection in the training process, which includes infection control and chemical safety.

“We’re taking a hard look at the requirements to get and keep a license. The right to earn a living without unnecessary government obstruction is a fundamental right. This is just the first step in reforming occupational licensing in Virginia and ensuring the government works for all citizens of the Commonwealth,” the governor said. “We are ensuring our licensing requirements are focused on protecting the public and provide opportunities for out-of-state skilled workers such as military spouses or dislocated workers, to get licensed in Virginia. These measures are common-sense solutions to strengthen our economy.”

About three weeks ago, Youngkin opened an office to review state regulations and expand regulatory transparency. He issued an executive order that directs the agency to reduce the state's regulatory burden by 25%. The office will be led by Andrew Wheeler who oversaw deregulation of the Environmental Protection agency under former President Donald Trump.

Virginia's regulatory requirements are slightly less burdensome than the average state, according to a study from the libertarian Cato Institute. However, the state has become more restrictive over the past decade and a half, moving from having the 10th best regulatory freedom in 2004 and 2005 to 18 in the 2019 ranking.